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Fifty-sixth session
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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/549)*]

56/56. Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 212 (III) of 19 November 1948, 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 and all subsequent related resolutions,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East covering the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001,[1]

Taking note of the letter dated 25 September 2001 from the Chairman of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the Commissioner-General,[2] contained in the report of the Commissioner-General,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General submitted in pursuance of its resolutions 48/40 E,[3] 48/40 H[4] and 48/40 J[5] of 10 December 1993 and 49/35 C[6] of 9 December 1994,

Recalling Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations,[7]

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No 13* and addendum (A/56/13 and Add.1).

[2] Ibid., p. viii.

[3] A/49/440.

[4] A/49/442.

[5] A/49/443.

[6] A/50/451.

[7] Resolution 22 A (I).

Affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,[8] to the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem,

Aware of the fact that Palestine refugees have, for over five decades, lost their homes, lands and means of livelihood,

Also aware of the continuing needs of Palestine refugees throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the other fields of operation, namely, in Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic,

Further aware of the valuable work done by the refugee affairs officers of the Agency in providing protection to the Palestinian people, in particular Palestine refugees,

Gravely concerned about the increased suffering of the Palestine refugees, including loss of life and injury, during the recent tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem,

Gravely concerned also about the policies of closure and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, which have had a grave impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestine refugees,

Deeply concerned about the negative impact of these closures and restrictions on the staff and services of the Agency,

Deeply concerned also about the continuing critical financial situation of the Agency and its effect on the continuity of provision of necessary Agency services to the Palestine refugees, including the emergency-related programmes,

Aware of the work of the Peace Implementation Programme of the Agency,

Recalling the signing in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization[9] and the subsequent implementation agreements,

Taking note of the agreement reached on 24 June 1994, embodied in an exchange of letters between the Agency and the Palestine Liberation Organization,[10]

Aware of the establishment of a working relationship between the Advisory Commission of the Agency and the Palestine Liberation Organization in accordance with General Assembly decision 48/417 of 10 December 1993,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as to all the staff of the Agency, for their tireless efforts and valuable work, including and particularly during the difficult situation of the past year;

2. *Also expresses its appreciation* to the Advisory Commission of the Agency, and requests it to continue its efforts and to keep the General Assembly informed of its activities, including the full implementation of decision 48/417;

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[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[9] A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/49/13), annex I.

3. *Takes note* of the functioning of the headquarters of the Agency in Gaza City on the basis of the Headquarters Agreement between the Agency and the Palestinian Authority;

4. *Acknowledges* the support of the host Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization for the Agency in the discharge of its duties;

5. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949[8] and to abide scrupulously by its provisions;

6. *Also calls upon* Israel to abide by Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations[7] with regard to the safety of the personnel of the Agency, the protection of its institutions and the safeguarding of the security of the facilities of the Agency in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem;

7. *Calls once again upon* the Government of Israel to compensate the Agency for damage to its property and facilities resulting from actions by the Israeli side;

8. *Calls upon* Israel particularly to cease obstructing the movement of the personnel, vehicles and supplies of the Agency, which has a detrimental impact on the Agency's operations;

9. *Also calls upon* Israel to cease its policies of closure and of placing restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, which have had a grave impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian population, in particular the Palestine refugees;

10. *Requests* the Commissioner-General to proceed with the issuance of identification cards for Palestine refugees and their descendants in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

11. *Notes* that the context created by the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization[9] and subsequent implementation agreements has had major consequences for the activities of the Agency, which is henceforth called upon, in close cooperation with the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, the specialized agencies and the World Bank, to continue to contribute towards the development of economic and social stability in the occupied territory;

12. *Notes also* that the functioning of the Agency remains essential in all fields of operation;

13. *Notes further* the significant success of the Peace Implementation Programme of the Agency, as well as the microfinance and enterprise programmes;

14. *Expresses concern* about those remaining austerity measures due to the financial crisis, which have affected the quality and level of some of the services of the Agency;

15. *Reiterates its request* to the Commissioner-General to proceed with the modernization of the archives of the Agency;

16. *Urges* all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to continue and to increase their contributions to the Agency so as to ease the current financial constraints and to support the Agency in maintaining the provision of the most basic and effective assistance to the Palestine refugees.

82nd plenary meeting
10 December 2001